

John Chad House  
State Route 100, north  
of U. S. Route 1  
Chadds Ford  
Delaware County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1256

HABS  
PA,  
23-CHAD,  
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JOHN CHAD HOUSE

HABS No. PA-1256

Location: State Route 100, north of U.S. Route 1, Chadds Ford, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

Significance: This early 18th century vernacular farmhouse, which has retained a high degree of integrity, was constructed and owned by members of a prominent Quaker family. During the Revolution, the house survived the Battle of the Brandywine.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Early 18th century.
2. Architect, builder: The initials "J. W. Jr." are inscribed on a stone near the upper right window of the south facade. Research into county records by the Chadds Ford Historical Society suggests that John Wyeth, Jr. (died 1760) is the only logical person to whom the inscription could refer. It is thus presumed that John Wyeth, Jr., was the builder of the house.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Francis Chadsey purchased the land the house is located on in 1702 and died there 1713, leaving it to son John Chadds, who married 1729 and died 1760. Chadds left it to his cousin Joseph Davis after the death of his wife, Elizabeth Chadds. She died in 1791 and Joseph Davis died the same year, so his son Benjamin Davis inherited it. In 1803, Benjamin Davis sold the property to Caleb Brinton whose family held it until it passed into the hands of the Hoffman family in 1872.
4. Alterations and additions: A bake oven now missing originally extended from the fireplace in the basement kitchen. Original pent eaves on the south, east and north facades have rotted off, though part of the northern eave was still intact ca. 1905, according to a photo in the Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, Pennsylvania. Original board partitions have been plastered over, though they are still there and in good shape under the plaster. The fireplace in the east bedroom, second floor, has been bricked up.

B. Historical Context:

Francis Chadsey, immigrated to America in 1685 and settled in Birmingham Township in 1696. He was a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly and was prominent in the Quaker meeting and township affairs. His son, John Chadds or Chad, probably constructed the existing house. John Chad was a prominent member of the community,

operating both a ferry and an inn near his home. Upon his death in 1760, his widow, Elizabeth Chad, continued to live in the house. She remained in the building during the Battle of the Brandywine, 11 September 1777, despite the house being in the direct line of fire.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The exterior of this early 18th-century house has been altered little, and the interior has been changed only slightly. It is a bank house, with a basement kitchen and cellar on the lowest level, two rooms each on the first and second floors, and a large unfinished attic.
2. Condition of fabric: Poor.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Two and a half stories plus basement kitchen; ca. 20' by 30'.
2. Foundations: Stone.
3. Walls: Stone.
4. Porches: A one-story shed-roofed porch extends across part of the south front.
5. Chimneys: There are two interior chimneys, one at each gable end. The lower portion of each is stone, while the portion above the roof line is brick.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Doors in north and south facades at the first floor, and on the basement floor on the south facade.
  - b. Windows: Fenestration irregular.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Steep-pitched gable roof sheathed with wood shingles.
  - b. Cornice, eaves: Little original cornice remaining.
  - c. Dormers: None.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: It is a bank house with a basement kitchen in the west half and a cellar in the east half. First floor has two rooms, divided by board partition. Second floor has hall and two bedrooms. Third floor has one large unfinished room. West wall has the large chimney for the cooking fireplace while there is another chimney in the southeast corner wall for a corner fireplace in the east room of both first and second floors.
2. Stairways: Stairways to the south of the chimney in the west wall. They are in original place but have been rebuilt.
3. Flooring: West room first floor is new; east room is original. All old floors on second and third floors. Basement kitchen probably originally stone. Cellar has earthen floor.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plastered; partitions and fireplace ends wood, the former covered with plaster.
5. Opening:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Mostly original.
6. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Heating: Fireplaces all open, except second floor, west room, which has been bricked up.
  - b. Lighting: Has never had electricity introduced, nor water, nor central heat.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Located on a hillside, facing south. The west facade faces State Route 100.
2. Outbuildings: A springhouse, located across State Route 100 to the west, is still extant.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Early views: A drawing, ca. 1855, can be found in Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1855) by Benson J. Lossing. The Chester County Historical Society owns several early photographs of the house. A ca. 1930 photograph is in the collection of Chester H. Thomas of Kennett Square, Pennsylvania.

B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Research files on the Chester County Historical Society.

National Register of Historic Places Nomination, prepared by the  
Chadds Ford Historical Society.

Prepared by: Bart Anderson  
Curator  
Chester County Historical  
Society  
August, 1958

Revised and edited by: Druscilla J. Null  
Historian  
Historic American  
Buildings Survey  
July, 1984